

### *Summer 2019: Tribute to Valparaiso University Law School (1879-2019)*

## David M. Welter

David R. Cleveland

Mark A. Heckler

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**DAVID M. WELTER (1959–2019)**

Professor Welter was an excellent lawyer, teacher, and colleague. He was a VULS graduate and Editor-in-Chief of the Law Review. In his time on the faculty, he served the Law School as clinic director, the criminal law clinic supervisor, and a teacher of trial advocacy. David contributed to the life of the Law School in countless other ways. In addition, he maintained a wide-ranging litigation practice in Northwest Indiana and was recently elected President of the Porter County Board of Elections.

**Dean David R. Cleveland**

We have lost a beloved member of the Valparaiso University community, David Welter '83, J.D. '90, professor of law. David just celebrated twenty-five years of employment at Valpo, and he was recently appointed President of the Porter County Board of Elections.

David joined the Valpo community as an undergraduate student earning his degree in 1983, and then went on to attend law school here, graduating in 1990. After four years of private practice, David joined the Law School, working in the Criminal Defense Law Clinic.

As a law student, he was editor in chief of the Law Review. During his time as a faculty member, David served Valparaiso University Law School as clinic director, criminal law clinic supervisor, and as a teacher of trial advocacy. He also contributed to the life of the Law School in countless other ways. David was known to always lend a hand or moment to colleagues and students whenever he was needed and got along with everyone. He mentored many students and helped countless people through his work in the clinic.

In addition to his love for the law and his family, David was passionate about traveling and running.

**President Mark A. Heckler**

The VULS community was shocked and saddened to learn of David's death in early December 2019. Some of us remember David as a law student, as well as a colleague on the faculty. Those who had the benefit of David's teaching and supervision in the clinical program likely remember him as a dedicated teacher, a skilled attorney, and an advocate who cared about both the clients and their student-attorneys.

To his family, there is nothing I can say that will ease the pain and loss you are experiencing. However, you can take some comfort in knowing that the law school, his colleagues at the law school, his students, his clients, and the local legal community all benefitted from David's contributions. We will miss him.

**Ivan E. Bodensteiner**

Notably, Professor Welter always wanted us to call him "Dave." He said it was so that clients didn't hear us calling him "professor" because they might get the wrong idea. But I always suspected it was one of the many teaching methods he used to help us transition from the classroom to the real world. He was instrumental in bringing us back to the real world and reminding us to apply what we learned in law school but also use common sense.

Professor Welter – Dave – led our criminal law clinic with a servant's heart. He capped off our legal education at Valpo by teaching us to focus on our clients' needs instead of ourselves. And there wasn't a person in the classroom or courtroom who didn't like Dave.

Former students were encouraged to keep in touch after graduation, and I was looking forward to a continued mentorship with Dave throughout my career. Losing him is devastating for us all. But our wonderful memories of Dave that may seem painful now, will soon

become healing gifts as we remember all that this great servant in the law taught us.

**Kyle Joseph Farris**

David Welter was my professor, mentor, and colleague.

Professor Welter was a truly remarkable man who enriched all of our lives. His reputation as a legend of law is truly deserved. Professor Welter was everything that you want in a lawyer, mentor, professor, and friend. He was simultaneously brilliant and humble—a rare combination of personality traits that made him so loved and respected. Like many other law students, he may have taught me as many valuable lessons about life and work as he did about the law. Something he taught me early on was "your client's problems are not your problems" and "there's nothing you can do to help someone who does not want to help themselves." I think of those conversations often. I will never be able to thank him enough for imparting his wisdom upon me and teaching me that a degree of separation is needed between client and lawyer and that if you try to save everyone you will end up being the one who needs to be saved. It was truly a privilege to have known and worked with such a leading light in our profession.

Professor Welter's death represents the sad loss of an amazing individual whose contribution to the law and Valparaiso University Law School is immeasurable. He was a role model to all of us, not only with regard to his work ethic but especially concerning his personality. He was a man whose understanding and beliefs were wrapped in justice, integrity, honesty, and passion, and I am sure his legacy will have long-lasting effects.

**Kaitlyn A. Murphy**